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In particular the author's rediscovery of Bokhara—Bokhara the wealthy, the antique, "an endless storehouse of covetable goods"; Bokhara, the most Oriental of cities, with its fifty bazaars and its "gorgeous vendors sitting patiently, not asking you to buy, staring at the heaps of metallics, silver bits, and notes resting on the little tabourets in front of them; Bokhara which nevertheless imports Singer sewing machines, and which has a moving picture theatre advertising that "the tango will be shown after the presentation of a striking comedy called 'The Suffragette' . . ." the whole description is remarkable, alike for its unmistakable reality and its charm of the *Arabian Nights*. Peculiarly informing—or, better, peculiarly capable of direct absorption into the mind—are the author's discourses upon Mohammedan cities and Mohammedan psychology: discourses which convey, as every true description of a genuine human thing should, an intelligent liking for the thing described. Mr. Graham enables one to feel that there is a certain cheerful and rational joy in being a Mohammedan and in living in Bokhara. Very different, it should be noted, is the author's view of this great religion, this widespread type of civilization, from that of Carlyle, who "saw mankind as Scotsmen, and all true religion whatever as a sort of Southern Scottish Puritanism." Mr. Graham himself is inveterately alive to differences of soul.

Fundamentally the charm of Mr. Graham's book is poetic—though his language is the most natural of prose and his point of view admits the commonplace. Like poetry, this book, in particular, is a widener of mental horizons and a balm to the spirit.

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POTENTIAL RUSSIA. By Richard Washburn Child. New York: E. P. Dutton and Company.

Russia is beginning to be the most interesting nation in the world. Hitherto that country has been thought of as possessed of immense inertia—and perhaps in the somewhat distant future, of great possibilities—but the immediate likelihood of Russia's proving herself capable of rapid progress, of her displaying the qualities that may make for a superior civilization, has seemed to most observers decidedly small.

Undoubtedly, it is dangerous to generalize about a people like the Russians, varied in race, distributed over a vast territory, and up to the present at least, imperfectly united by a national consciousness. And it is easy to idealize on the basis of certain striking phenomena which the war has brought to light. In no other nation, for example, has there been anything to compare with Russia's nation-wide prohibition and its effects. Would such a measure be possible among any other people, and could the change

from prevalent drunkenness to almost complete sobriety possibly be so marked in any other land? At any rate, the experiment and its results have impressed the world.

Mr. Richard Washburn Child, in his stimulating volume, *Potential Russia*, takes perhaps a rather rosy view of Russian possibilities; but he seems, nevertheless, a fairly trustworthy mentor, for the reason that his method is to attempt to discover the real qualities of the common Russian man and woman. In the common soldier, for example, he finds qualities of self-sacrifice and idealism inconsistent with the ordinary notion of the Russian soldier as a stolid, unthinking creature. "Maxim," the typical peasant, as Mr. Child conceives him, with his "lusty health," his good though untrained mind, "his blue eyes in which no one could quite tell whether there were simplicity or guile, dense ignorance or the ancient meditations of old Oriental mysteries," is a person of lovable qualities and of unknown possibilities. And Maxim, "who is more a conscripted, herded, Government-driven soldier than any in the war, is serving with all the strength of his free will, with fierce bravery, with self-effacement." Perhaps the general ignorance of the Russian peasant has not been overestimated; but his "free will," his capacity for idealistic action, have been underrated. As the result of changes produced by the war his mind is being awakened, and through further changes which seem certain to come, he will learn more and more.

By reason of his standpoint, his recognition of the human factors in the problem, Mr. Child is able to answer with what seems a superior degree of certainty some of the commoner questions that are asked about Russia and the Russian people. Why did the Czar supplant the Grand Duke? Will Russia make a separate peace? Is the German influence strong? Will there be a revolution? Is Russia permeated by graft? To all these questions the author gives answers that seem reasonable and psychologically sound.

Turning from the people to the land, Mr. Child points out the economic possibilities of Russia briefly but with convincing force, and he shows with clearness and good sense the sort of changes that will have to occur in the American attitude and in American ways of doing business, before Americans can take proper advantage of the opportunity for commercial enterprise which Russia presents.

It may be that Mr. Child's enthusiasm carries him rather far; but his book is illuminating and awakening in its presentation of the more hopeful and human side of the Russian people. It will remove many misconceptions, and it indicates tendencies that surely exist, whatever may be their present power or rate of development.

The impressions contained in this volume are presented with power. There is a vividness and a realization of human feeling in Mr. Child's pictures, especially of the Russian refugees, such as is equalled in few war-books. The zest and narrative power with

which the author writes hold the interest and move the sympathies in a way that is remarkable in a book, not of fiction, but of scrupulously expressed fact and opinion.

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NIGHTS. By Elizabeth Robins Pennell. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1916.

There is a kind of ascetic restraint in the reminiscent delight of Elizabeth Robins Pennell's book of memories of parts of her life spent in Rome and Venice and London and Paris. Part of this effect, no doubt, is due to the author's scrupulous care to avoid indiscreet revelations and to her anxiety to refrain from writing again what she has already written elsewhere. But in larger measure this quality is simply the stamp of genuineness. Mrs. Pennell has obviously striven to recall the fugitive atmosphere of the past, as for one of the inner circle, rather than to paint that past in conventionally glowing colors for the benefit of those of a later day and of an outer group. A kind of good-natured garrulousness, therefore—a willingness to make allowances for the reader's prepossessions and even to play upon them somewhat, which sometimes helps to make reminiscence facilely interesting—is entirely absent from this record. Not William Dean Howells himself is more devoted to the truth than is Mrs. Pennell in this book.

Another circumstance which bears witness to the fine and scrupulous genuineness of these memoirs, is the fact that the nights of play of which the author tells were set against days of work, which formed their matrix and background. The pages of the book thus reflect the temper of strenuous earnestness, the contempt of all manner of falsity and pretense, as well as the liberal spirit which is characteristic of the true artist. The qualities that make real artists a class by themselves, and a rather exclusive class, are in this book—which the author is, however, continually trying to make communicative and not exclusive.

The result of all this is that these recollections of Mrs. Pennell's show a finer sense of values, and hence are far more rewarding, to those who have ears to hear, than are reminiscences of the more overtly revealing or concretely story-telling type. In reading of these bygone nights, one can hardly fail to catch something of the feeling of artistic life as it was in Rome and Venice in "the æsthetic eighties" and in London and Paris in "the fighting nineties." What the author does *not* say often contributes to the building up of a true impression or the correction of a false one.

Mrs. Pennell does not give only general or summary impressions: she portrays places and people as they were at certain moments; the feeling not of the day only but of the hour lives again in her pages. Nor are her descriptions merely photographic. There